

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 and 21-29 are now pending in the above-captioned application.

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the courtesy shown to applicant's representative during the interview of November 9, 2004. During that interview, several models of the invention were displayed and demonstrated and the Prior Art references applied in the parent application were discussed.

As an initial note, the Examiner inquired as to whether the reinforcing scrim was included in the present C-I-P application. This aspect of the invention is set forth in a Provisional Application filed by the previous Attorney of record, on April 22, 2004. A formal application claiming that aspect of the invention may be filed shortly.

During the interview, the Examiner repeated his position with regard to the KIM reference and pointed out some additional features – namely that KIM discloses rebar (element 22 in Figure 6) and that KIM discloses that the outer tube is “deformable”.

KIM, however, does not teach or suggest the FENCEBAG invention as conceived by applicant, and applicant believes the Examiner concurs at least to some extent in this regard. However, the Examiner reiterated that KIM teaches the use of “plastic” (in one oblique instance) and the limitation of a thickness of 0.2 to 3 mm for his shell.

Applicant can only respectfully agree to disagree on this latter point. While the words are set forth in KIM, the teaching is not. KIM does not appear to contemplate a flexible bag-like device as in applicant's invention.

However, rather than further disputing this point, applicant has amended the present claims to recite the limitation of the bag form being less than 0.2mm, a thickness less than that taught by the KIM reference. The Examiner indicated on the Interview Summary Sheet that such a thickness limitation may be given favorable consideration.

Paragraph [0019] of the Specification (as amended, see attached) describes the range of thickness of materials. The range is described as 4 to 40 mils (0.1 to 1.0 millimeters), further refined as 5 to 10 mils (0.12 to 0.25 millimeters) and the ideal thickness given as substantially 0.15 millimeters. Applicant submits that these ranges and specific example illustrate quite clearly that applicant's plastic "bag" is much thinner than the rigid tubes of KIM and hence pliable.

POCKET CLAIMS

During the interview, the Examiner noted the pocket formation on the sample products and remarked that the discovered art did not seem to show this feature. Claims 8, 18, and 27 claim this feature explicitly, and the Examiner's attention is drawn to those claims. New independent claim 28 recites this feature as well, and applicant submits it is patentably distinct.

NEW CLAIM 29

New claim 29 has been added for the Examiner's consideration. This claim includes the limitation that the pliable tubular segment is also ~~non-structural~~. The tubular segment of KIM forms a part of the structure of the resultant column, and thus this new limitation distinguishes the present invention over that of Kim. Favorable consideration is requested.

SUBSTITUTE SPECIFICATION

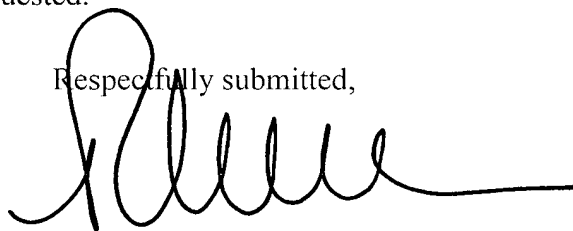
Applicant has submitted a SUBSTITUTE SPECIFICATION to correct numerous typographical errors noted by the Examiner in the parent application. A PROPOSED DRAWING AMENDMENT is also submitted herewith to correct the errors noted by the Examiner in the parent application.

CONCLUSION

The references applied in the parent do not teach or suggest applicant's FENCEBAG invention. The claims of the present application have been amended to more clearly distinguish the present invention over the Prior Art of record. Thus, the present application is presently in condition for allowance.

An early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Bell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert P. Bell
Registration Number 34,546

Robert Platt Bell
Registered Patent Attorney
8033 Washington Road
Alexandria, VA 22308

(703) 768-0340

c:\work\forms\pto\amendment\amendment.frm

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A casting form attachable to a form support member erected on a surface contiguous to a substrate upon which a cast-in-place structural element is to be formed, the casting form comprising:

a non-rigid pliable tubular segment which is foldable and rollable upon itself in any axis, including an open first end; and

a form suspension assembly attachable between the pliable tubular segment and the form support member for suspending the pliable tubular segment from the form support member above the substrate, wherein the non-rigid pliable tubular segment comprises a polymer material having a thickness less than 0.2 millimeters.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of claim 1, wherein the [pliable tubular segment further comprises a] polymer material has a thickness ranging from 0.1 to less than 0.2 millimeters.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of claim [1] 2, wherein the [pliable tubular segment further comprises a sidewall including] polymer material has a thickness of substantially 0.15 millimeters [in the range of 4 mils to 40 mils].

4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of claim [1] 3, wherein the form suspension assembly further comprises a strap made of the polymer material and connected to the pliable tubular

segment, the strap attachable to the form support member for suspending the pliable tubular segment above the substrate.

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED). The ~~casting~~ form of claim 1, wherein the form suspension assembly further comprises:

a suspension assembly connector attachable to the form support member; and

[a] at least one support arm connected to and extending from a suspension assembly connector, the pliable tubular segment attachable to the at least one support arm.

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~casting~~ form of claim 1, wherein the form suspension assembly further comprises:

a suspension assembly connector attachable to the form support member;

[a] at least one support arm connected to and extending from a suspension assembly connector;

and

a support ring supported by the at least one support arm, the pliable tubular segment attachable to the support ring.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~casting~~ form of claim 1, further comprising:

a connecting member support assembly attached to the ~~non-rigid~~ pliable tubular segment for connecting ~~and supporting~~ a first end of a connecting member to the casting form during the casting of the cast-in-place structural element,

wherein the connecting member support assembly comprises at least one pocket formed in the non-rigid pliable tubular segment, for accepting the first end of the connecting member such that when the casting form is filled with casting material, the casting material surrounds the first end of the connecting member.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of Claim 7, wherein the [connecting member support assembly] at least one pocket further [comprises a pocket including] includes an aperture, a peripheral edge of the pocket aperture aligned with and connected to a peripheral edge of a side wall aperture, the pocket configured to receive [and support] the first end of the connecting member during the casting of the cast-in-place structural element so as to allow casting material to form to a contour of the first end of the connecting member.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of claim 1, further comprising:

a form positioning and dampening assembly attachable to the form support member and a surface adjacent to a location upon which the cast-in-place structural element is to be cast for dampening motion in the form support member.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A casting form erectable on a substrate upon which a cast-in-place structural element is to be formed for casting a cast-in-place structural element, the casting form comprising:

a form support member erectable on a surface contiguous to the substrate upon which the cast-in-

place structural element is to be cast;

a form suspension assembly attachable to the form support member; and

a ~~non-rigid~~ pliable tubular segment which is foldable and rollable upon itself in any axis

attachable to the form support member for suspending the pliable tubular segment from the form support member above the substrate,

wherein the non-rigid pliable tubular segment comprises a polymer material having a thickness less than 0.2 millimeters.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of claim 10, wherein the form support member is erected on a surface internal to a sidewall of the pliable tubular segment.

12. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of claim 10, wherein the form support member is erected on a surface external to a sidewall of the pliable tubular segment.

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of claim 10, wherein [the pliable tubular segment further comprises a cylindrical sleeve formed of a] sheet polymer material [having] ~~has~~ a wall thickness ranging from 0.1 to less than 0.2 millimeters [in the range of 4 mils to 40 mils].

14. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of claim [10] ~~13~~, wherein the form suspension assembly further comprises:

a strap made of the polymer material and connected near a first end of the pliable tubular

segment, the strap attachable to the form support member for suspending the pliable tubular segment above the substrate.

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of claim 10, wherein the form suspension assembly further comprises:

a suspension assembly connector attachable to the form support member; and

[a] at least one support arm connected to and extending from suspension assembly connector, the pliable tubular segment attachable to the at least one support arm.

16. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of claim 10, wherein the form suspension assembly further comprises: a suspension assembly connector attachable to the form support member; a support arm connected to and extending from suspension assembly connector; and a support ring supported by the support arm, the pliable tubular segment attachable to the support ring.

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of Claim 10, further comprising:

a connecting member support assembly attached to the non-rigid pliable tubular segment for connecting and supporting a first end of a connecting member during casting of the cast-in-place structural element,

wherein the connecting member support assembly comprises at least one pocket formed in the non-rigid pliable tubular segment, for accepting the first end of the connecting member such that when the casting form is filled with casting material, the casting material surrounds the first end of the

connecting member.

18. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of Claim 17, wherein the [connecting member support assembly] at least one pocket further [comprises a soft pocket] includes an aperture, a peripheral edge of the pocket aperture aligned with and connected to a peripheral edge of a side wall [of the pliable tubular segment] aperture, the pocket configured to receive [or support] the first end of the connecting member during casting of the cast-in-place structural element so as to allow casting material to form to a contour of the first end of the connecting member.

19. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of claim 17, wherein the [connecting member support assembly] at least one pocket further comprises a hard pocket connected to the pliable tubular segment, the hard pocket defining an interior portion including a configuration approximating a configuration of a first end of a connecting member, the hard pocket configured to receive [or support] the first end of the connecting member during casting of the cast-in-place structural element.

20. (CANCELLED)

21. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The casting form of claim 10, further comprising:

a form positioning and dampening assembly attachable to the form support member and a surface adjacent to a location upon which the cast-in-place structural element is to be cast for dampening motion in the form support member.

22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A fencing system comprising:

a first form support member erected on a surface contiguous to a substrate upon which the cast-in-place structural element is to be formed;

a second form support member erected on the surface contiguous to a substrate upon which the cast-in-place structural element is to be formed;

a first ~~non-rigid~~ pliable tubular segment which is foldable and rollable upon itself in any axis attached to and suspended from the form support member;

a first connecting member attachment assembly connected to the first pliable tubular segment;

a second ~~non-rigid~~ pliable tubular segment which is foldable and rollable upon itself in any axis attached to suspended from the second form support member;

a second connecting member attachment assembly connected to the second pliable tubular segment; and

a connecting member including a first end attached to the first connecting member attachment assembly,

wherein the non-rigid pliable tubular segment comprises a polymer material having a thickness less than 0.2 millimeters.

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The fencing system of claim 22, [further comprising] wherein the first form support member is erected in a first post hole and the second form support member erected

in a second post hole.

24. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The fencing system of claim 22, further comprising:

a first form positioning and dampening assembly attachable to the first form support member for stabilizing the first form support member; and

a second form positioning and dampening assembly attachable to the second form support member for stabilizing the second form support member.

25. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The fencing system of claim 22, further comprising:

a curable casting mixture cast-in-place within the first pliable tubular segment and the second first pliable tubular segment.

26. (NEW) The fencing system of claim 22, wherein the first connector member attachment assembly further comprises:

_____ a connecting member assembly attached to the first non-rigid pliable tubular segment for connecting a first end of a connecting member after casting of the cast-in-place structural element,

_____ wherein the connecting member assembly comprises at least one pocket formed in the first non-rigid pliable tubular segment, for accepting a plug having substantially the same size and shape as an end of the connecting member such that when the casting form is filled with casting material, the casting

material surrounds the plug.

27. (NEW) The casting form of Claim 26, wherein the at least one pocket further includes an aperture, a peripheral edge of the pocket aperture aligned with and connected to a peripheral edge of a side wall aperture, the pocket configured to receive the first end of the connecting member during casting of the cast-in-place structural element so as to allow casting material to form to a contour of the first end of the connecting member.

28. (NEW) A casting form attachable to a form support member erected on a surface contiguous to a substrate upon which a cast-in-place structural element is to be formed, the casting form comprising:
a pliable tubular segment, including an open first end;
a form suspension assembly attachable between the pliable tubular segment and the form support member for suspending the pliable tubular segment from the form support member above the substrate;
a connecting member assembly attached to the non-rigid pliable tubular segment for forming a cavity for connecting an end of a connecting member to the cast-in place structural element after the casting of the cast-in-place structural element,

wherein the connecting member assembly comprises at least one pocket formed in the non-rigid pliable tubular segment, for accepting an object having a size and shape similar to the end of the connecting member such that when the casting form is filled with casting material, the casting material surrounds the object to form a cavity in the resultant cast-in-place structural element for accepting the

end of the connecting member,

wherein the at least one pocket further includes:

an aperture formed in a side wall of the pliable tubular segment,

a flat pliable ring, formed of pliable material having an inner peripheral edge aligned with
and connected to a peripheral edge of the aperture, and

a flat end cap, formed of pliable material having an outer peripheral edge aligned with
and connected to the peripheral edge of the ring,

wherein the at least one pocket may be folded flat to an inside portion of the pliable
tubular segment, and may be expanded to form the cavity when the object is inserted into the
pocket.

29. (NEW) A casting form attachable to a form support member erected on a surface contiguous
to a substrate upon which a cast-in-place structural element is to be formed, the casting form comprising:

a non-rigid, non-structural pliable tubular segment which is foldable and rollable upon itself in
any axis, including an open first end; and

a form suspension assembly attachable between the pliable tubular segment and the form support
member for suspending the pliable tubular segment from the form support member above the substrate.



Ser. No. 10/613,900

SUBSTITUTE SPECIFICATION

COPY WITH CHANGES HIGHLIGHTED

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application [claims the priority] is a Continuation-In-Part of U.S. Non-Provisional Utility patent application Ser. No. 10/064,094 entitled “Casting Form for a Cast-In-Place Columnar Structural Element and Fencing System Including Cast-in-place Columnar Structural Elements”, filed [Oct.] October 2, 2002, which in turn claims the benefit of Provisional Application Serial No. 60/394,638 entitled “Casting Form for a Cast-In-Place Columnar Structural Element and Fencing System Including Cast-in-place Columnar Structural Elements”, filed [Jul.] July 8, 2002.

[BACKGROUND]

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to building methods and devices and more particularly to a method and apparatus for casting a structural element in-place and to a fencing system including a plurality of cast-in-place columnar structural elements.

[Prior Art]

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Structural elements formed of a variety of materials and utilizing a vast number of methods and used for a wide assortment of purposes are known in the art. Concrete structural elements are pre-cast in a variety of sizes and configurations and are used for any number of applications.

[0004] Fence posts are one form of a columnar structural element. Fence posts have historically included a variety of materials including wood, composite, masonry and metal structural members, any of which may be affixed to the ground by being placed in the ground employing compacted earth or concrete fill around the member placed in a post hole. Popular fencing techniques have historically favored the use of wood posts as a common material for fencing due both to the availability of and the relative ease of working with wood.

[0005] Commonly, fence posts are supported in the ground either by compacted earth fill or preferably by pouring concrete around a post placed in a post-hole. In those cases where concrete is the material used to form a fence post, the posts are erected, in the case of pre-cast posts, or in the case of cast-in-place concrete posts, the posts are formed and poured. During the pour it is

common that each post be stabilized laterally sometimes by more than one "kicker" so that the form remains upright during the pour. After the concrete has cured, the supports are removed, the forms stripped and the interconnecting horizontal elements are connected to the posts. Fence posts are one form of a columnar structural element. Fence posts have historically included a variety of materials including wood, composite, masonry and metal structural members, any of which may be affixed to the ground by being placed in the ground employing compacted earth or concrete fill around the member placed in a post hole. Popular fencing techniques have historically favored the use of wood posts as a common material for fencing due both to the availability of and the relative ease of working with wood.

[0006] When considering the choice of wood as a material for a partially buried columnar structural element, it has been observed that wood is subject to attack by a variety of environmental elements and is subject to rot. Historically, one solution to the relatively short life cycle of wood posts has been to chemically treat the post so as to reduce moisture absorption and the adverse affects of various environmental elements.

[0007] The use of various chemicals used for treatment of wood to be used for columnar structural elements including fence posts has, in some instances, proven to be unacceptable or undesirable for a variety of reasons including environmental concerns. It may, therefore, be

advantageous to provide an alternative structural member, and method of erection of an alternative structural member, to presently used chemically treated wood posts for use in fencing construction.

[0008] The use of concrete fence posts per se is well known in the prior art. Historically, however, it appears that pre-cast or prefabricated concrete posts have been favored over efforts to provide for a cast-in-place post. This may in part be due to the fact that concrete forms have typically been heavy and cumbersome. The task of transporting forms to a plurality of post holes, erecting the forms at the post holes, stripping and cleaning the forms, and transporting the forms from the jobsite have presented substantial hurdles to the use of cast-in-place concrete for fencing systems. Nevertheless, there have been attempts.

[0009] Mohss, U.S. Patent No. 5,593,623, issued January 14, 1997 [to Mohss], entitled "Casting Mould" discloses a casting mould for containing and supporting a casting compound when casting elongated objects, on an underlayer and extending vertically which includes a substantially inelastic flexible elongated envelope having an opening at one or both ends. The envelope is held in substantially vertical alignment while being stretched by cast compound introduced through the upper opening so as to form a casting mould having a circular cross-section, extending vertically and supporting and containing the cast compound. Mohss discloses that the substantially inelastic flexible elongated envelope be held manually during the casting process.

[0010] Chatelain, U.S. Patent No. 5,580,480, issued December 3, 1996, [to Chatelain] entitled "Form For Making Fence Posts in Situ", discloses a form for making a concrete fence post supported by the ground. The form includes two elongated halves, which are hinged together and clamped along one edge. The form is supported over a post hole by a pair of feet that sit on the surface of the ground and which are attached to the two elongated halves. Concrete is poured into the form. Reinforcing bars or mesh is inserted in the wet concrete and the concrete is permitted to set. The form is opened and removed resulting in a reinforced concrete fence post. A plurality of apertures may be formed in the post by sliding a solid rod through a pair of opposing apertures located in the two elongated halves. The rods may be withdrawn from the form when the concrete and the form when the concrete has set. A cable is then passed through the aperture to form a horizontal fencing member.

[0011] Chatelain, U.S. Patent No. 5,946,881, issued September 7, 1999 [also to Chatelain], entitled "Form for Casting a Concrete Fence Post in Situ and Process for its Use", discloses a form for casting a concrete fence post in place and the process of using the form. The form has elongated first and second halves, each having outwardly extending flanges, which are attached together to form a cavity in the shape of a finished fence post. The form halves are either slightly tapered or fastened by fasteners, which may be loosened so that the form can be easily lifted off the resulting

cured concrete post. The process for using the form includes the steps of placing the post form over a post hole and pouring wet concrete into the top of the post form. The wet concrete is allowed to cure and then the form is lifted off the cured post.

[0012] Both of the above references disclose reusable forms, which therefore do not solve the issues of dealing with relatively heavy reusable forms.

[0013] Dyer, U.S. Patent No. 3,024,512, issued March 13, 1962, [to Dyer] entitled Disposable Concrete Form for Posts and Columns discloses a form used for casting posts and the like in place. The form is made of a semi rigid sheet material such as cardboard or plastic that may be stripped and disposed of after use. The form is supported over the hole by means of tabs located near a lower end of the form which are place in contact with the surface of the ground adjacent the post hole. The disadvantage of such a system lies in part with the fact that the support tabs may be useless in situations wherein the post hole is oversized or in situations wherein the post hole is located on a slope or incline.

[0014] It may be advantageous, therefore, to provide a disposable form for pouring or casting a columnar structural element in-place using a form that is supported above a substrate by a support

member that will be cast into, and therefore incorporated in, the finished columnar structural element.

[0015] There may also be advantage found in providing a disposable form for pouring or casting a columnar structural element in-place using a form that does not rely on manual support or other external support relying on the surface of the ground adjacent the post hole.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0016] The present invention is directed to a casting form including a pliable tubular segment, open at a first end and a form suspension assembly attachable between the pliable tubular segment and a form support member. The form support member is erected on a surface contiguous to a substrate upon which the cast-in-place structural element is to be formed for suspending the pliable tubular segment from the form support member above the substrate.

[0017] In one preferred embodiment of the invention, the pliable tubular segment is suspended from the form support member with a first end of the pliable tubular segment attached to the form support member with the pliable tubular segment positioned about the form support member. In this embodiment, the form support member is erected on a surface internal to a

sidewall of the pliable tubular segment. In this embodiment, the form support member may serve both to support the pliable tubular segment during the casting process and as a reinforcing member, strengthening and reinforcing the cast member following casting.

[0018] In an alternate embodiment of the invention, the pliable tubular segment is attached to a form support member that is erected on a surface contiguous to a substrate upon which the cast-in-place structural element is to be formed which is external to a sidewall of the pliable tubular segment.

[0019] The term "pliable" as used herein means foldable and/or rollable along both the length and the width of the material. The use of a pliable material for the form provides a significant reduction in bulk or volume and therefore may reduce costs associated with shipping and transport of the casting form. For instance, the material for the pliable tubular segments for several hundred linear feet of fencing may be contained on a single roll that may be easily carried by a single individual. In one preferred embodiment, the pliable tubular segment is configured as a cylindrical sleeve formed of a polyethylene material having a thickness in the range of [4 to 40 mils] 0.1 to 1.0 millimeters. Preferably, the pliable tubular segment is formed of a sheet polymer having a thickness in the range of [5 to 10 mils] 0.13 to 0.25 millimeters. In one preferred embodiment, the pliable tubular segment is formed of a sheet polymer having a thickness

substantially equal to [6 mils] 0.15 millimeters. The cylindrical sleeve may be produced on a roll and cut to length or as required. The pliable tubular segment may be formed of a material that may be stripped away following curing of the casting compound. The pliable tubular segment may be formed of a material that is disposable after use.

[0020] Alternately, the pliable tubular segment may be formed of a material that may form a finished surface to the cast-in-place structural element or, in the alternative, may form a surface that may be finished by coating or covering, for instance by grout, stucco or paint. Additionally, due to the fact that the form is configured as a pliable tubular segment, it is conceivable that an outer surface of the casting may be embossed during a curing period for the casting compound in such a manner that a finished outer surface of the casting may include an embossed or textured surface, for instance replicating a stone or wood surface.

[0021] In an alternate preferred embodiment, the pliable tubular segment may include reinforcement strips affixed to the wall of the pliable tubular segment to provide added tensile strength to the girth or the length of the pliable tubular segment. A reinforcement strip may be formed at the first end of the form simply by rolling the pliable tubular segment back upon itself forming a collar having a plurality of layers. Alternately, a reinforcement strip may be formed of a polymer sheet material attached to the pliable tubular segment in locations as required by

welding. A preferred method of attachment of a reinforcement strip to the pliable tubular segment is by means of plastic or impulse welding. For instance, it may be desirable to reinforce the first end of the pliable tubular segment from which the weight of the form suspends, by welding one or more additional strips of material along the first end of the pliable tubular segment. Similarly, it may be desirable to reinforce the pliable tubular segment by adding reinforcement strips along the length of the pliable tubular segment, particularly above and below locations at which pockets are formed in the pliable tubular segment for supporting a connecting member during the casting of the cast-in-place structural element.

[0022] The form suspension assembly may be configured as a strap having a first end connected near the first end of the pliable tubular segment at a first end connection point, and a second end connected near the first end of the pliable tubular segment at a second end connection point. Preferably, the first end connection point opposes the second end connection point. The strap is attachable between the form support member and the pliable tubular segment allowing the pliable tubular segment to be suspended from the form support member.

[0023] Alternately, the form suspension assembly may include a form carriage including, in one embodiment, a form support ring. Preferably, the form support ring has a perimeter shaped according to the desired finished cross-section of the uppermost end of the columnar structural

element being cast. The form support ring is attachable to the form support member by one or more support arms which interconnect the form support ring and a form carriage connector element which attaches to the support member.

[0024] The casting form may also include a form positioning and dampening assembly positioned near a lower end of the pliable tubular segment and attached to the structural support member and an adjacent fixed surface, for instance an interior surface of a fence post hole. In one embodiment, the form positioning and dampening assembly includes a ring connected to the structural support member. Preferably, the ring slideably and frictionally engages the structural support member such that the ring may be positioned at a selected elevation along the length of the structural support member. Also preferably, the ring included one or more perforations to permit passage of concrete through the ring. In one preferred embodiment, a plurality of positioning arms extend from the ring to contact the adjacent post hole wall.

[0025] In one preferred embodiment, the support member includes a metal structural member that is driven into the substrate. For example, the support member may be configured as a length of reinforcing steel bar (rebar). In one preferred embodiment, a hole is excavated at a desired location for erection of a cast-in-place structural element. The rebar is driven into the substrate located at the bottom of the excavated hole. In one preferred embodiment, a length of 1/2 inch

rebar is driven 12 inches into the substrate to provide the requisite support structure. The rebar is preferably driven into the substrate such that a longitudinal axis of the rebar is oriented in a substantially vertical manner.

[0026] In one preferred embodiment, a fencing system includes first and second structural support members erected on a substrate, with a first pliable tubular segment attached to and suspended from the first structural support member, and a second pliable tubular segment attached to and suspended from the second structural support member. A first end of one or more connecting members are attached to first connecting member attachment assemblies of the first casting form and a second end of one or more connecting members are attached to second connecting member attachment assemblies of the second casting form. In the preferred embodiment of the fencing system, a curable casting mixture is cast-in-place within the pliable tubular segments following installation of the connecting member(s), although in alternate preferred embodiments, the one or more connecting members may be attached to the first and second fence posts following casting and curing of the casting material.

[0027] In one preferred embodiment, the connecting member support assembly is configured to receive or support an end of a connecting member. The connecting member support assembly may include a rail blockout formed as a pocket extending across the aperture formed through the

pliable tubular segment attaching at substantially opposing walls of the pliable tubular segment and configured to receive or form a blockout for a void for receiving a connecting member from either side of the structural member following casting. In the alternative the pocket may attach to the sidewall at a single location of the pliable tubular segment and may be configured to receive or form a blockout for a void for receiving a connecting member at a single location along the length of the structural member following casting. The attachment assembly may be formed of a pliable polymeric material attached to the wall of the pliable tubular segment at the location at which connection of the connecting member to the cast-in-place structural element is desired. The pocket extends into the interior of the pliable tubular segment. The pocket is configured to permit insertion of an end of the connecting member into the pocket. Preferably, the pocket is attached by impulse or plastic welding, forming preferably, a water tight connection at the juncture of the pocket and the sidewall.

[0028] Alternately, the connecting member attachment assemblies may be configured for attachment to the structural support members by a variety of means. The connecting member support assembly may include an axis that intersects the support member or in the alternative variations of the connecting member support assembly may be attached to the support member in a manner wherein the axis of connecting member support assembly does not intersect support member, but rather passes alongside the support member. In such embodiments either or both the

axis of connecting member support assembly and the support member may lie eccentric to a center of the diameter of a posthole in which the casting form is being installed. Additionally, the connecting member support assembly may be configured as a single tubular element that attaches to the support member or in the alternative it may be configured including an assembly of two or more members connectable to the support member and/or one another. Alternately, the connecting member attachment assemblies may be configured as a rigid member that supports an end of a connecting member. Alternately, the connecting member support assembly may include a tacking strip affixed to the inner surface of the pliable tubular segment and to which wire or other connecting materials may be attached by nailing, stapling or the like.

[0029] Additionally, the fencing system may include a variety of devices, which permit attachment of assorted fencing elements and accessories to the cast-in-place column. For instance, a gate may be hung from the cast-in-place column by attaching a lag shield into the column to which a threaded connection may be made following the casting of the column.

[0030] A method for erecting a fencing system, according to the present invention includes the steps of erecting a first structural support member on a substrate, erecting a second structural support member on the substrate within a selected proximity to the first structural support member, placing a first pliable tubular segment about the first structural support member and

attaching the first pliable tubular segment to the first structural support member so that the first pliable tubular segment is suspended from and about the first structural support member, placing a second pliable tubular segment about the second structural support member and attaching the second pliable tubular to the first structural support member so that the second pliable tubular segment is suspended from and about the second structural support member, a first end of a connecting member is inserted into and supported by a first connecting member support assembly, a second end of a connecting member is inserted into and supported by a second connecting member support assembly and a curable casting mixture is cast-in-place within the first pliable tubular segment and the second first pliable tubular segment.

[0031] A method for erecting a fence includes the steps of erecting a first form support member on a substrate, erecting a second form support member on the substrate, suspending a first pliable tubular segment from the first form support member, suspending a second pliable tubular segment from the second form support member, attaching a first connecting member first end to the first pliable tubular segment, attaching the first connecting member second end to the second pliable tubular segment, placing a casting mixture in the first pliable tubular segment forming a first cast-in-place post.

[0032] The present invention consists of the device hereinafter more fully described, illustrated in the accompanying drawings and more particularly pointed out in the appended claims, it being understood that changes may be made in the form, size, proportions and minor details of construction without departing from the spirit or sacrificing any of the advantages of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0033] Figure 1 is a [representative] perspective view of [a] the overall fencing system being erected according to the teachings of the present invention illustrating completed fence sections and fence sections under construction[;].

[0034] Figure 2 is a [representative] cutaway side view of a first embodiment of a casting form for a fence post to which a plurality of horizontal connecting members have been attached prior to casting the fence post in place[;].

[0035] Figure 3 is a [representative] cutaway side view of a cast-in-place fence post made using the casting form of Figure 2, illustrating [showing] horizontal connecting members supported by the fence post[;].

[0036] Figure 4 is a [representative] cutaway side view detail of a the casting form for a cast-in-place fence[;] of the present invention illustrating, in a second embodiment, a form positioning and dampening assembly 20 further illustrated in Figure 31, in a third embodiment, a suspension assembly illustrated in more detail in Figure 5, and in a tenth embodiment, a connecting member support assembly illustrated in more detail in Figure 14.

[0037] Figure 5 is a [representative] cutaway side view detail of [one] a third embodiment of the casting form of the present, invention illustrating a one embodiment of a form suspension assembly[;].

[0038] Figure 6 is a [representative] perspective view of a fourth embodiment of the casting form of the present invention, illustrating another embodiment of a form support assembly supporting a pliable tubular form[;].

[0039] Figure 7 is a [representative] cutaway side view detail of a fifth embodiment of the casting form of the present invention, illustrating another embodiment of a form suspension assembly[;].

[0040] Figure 8 is [a] an enlarged [representative] cutaway side view of the fifth embodiment of Figure 7, illustrating details [detail of one] of the means for attaching a pliable tubular segment to a form suspension assembly[;].

[0041] Figure 9 is a [representative] perspective view of a sixth embodiment of the casting form of the present invention, illustrating another embodiment of a form support assembly supporting a pliable tubular form[;].

[0042] Figure 10 is a [representative] perspective view of a seventh embodiment of the casting form of the present invention, illustrating another embodiment of a form support assembly, here illustrated at an upper end of a pliable tubular segment [which is modified to include a form suspension assembly;].

[0043] Figure 11 is a [representative] side view detail of a eighth embodiment of the casting form of the present invention, illustrating another embodiment of a form support assembly supporting a pliable tubular form [and a structural member attachment assembly;].

[0044] Figure 12 is a [representative] front view detail of [a] the form support assembly of Figure 11 [supporting a pliable tubular form and a structural member attachment assembly;].

[0045] Figure 13 is a [representative] cutaway side view of a ninth embodiment of casting form the present invention, illustrating detail of one means for attaching a form suspension assembly to a form support and reinforcement member[;].

[0046] Figure 14 is [a representative] an enlarged side cutaway view of a tenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a connecting member support assembly[;] 14 of Figure 4.

[0047] Figure 15 is a [representative] perspective cutaway view of a connecting member support assembly[;] of Figure 14.

[0048] Figure 16 is a [representative] side cutaway view of eleventh embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a [an] connecting member attached to and supported by the casting form[;].

[0049] Figure 17 is a [representative] top cutaway view of the eleventh embodiment of Figure 16, illustrating a [an] connecting member attached to and supported by the casting form[;].

[0050] Figure 18 is a cutaway side view detail of a twelfth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a casting form including a hard pocket connecting member support assembly[;].

[0051] Figure 19 is a cutaway top view detail of a casting form of Figure 18, [including a hard pocket connecting member support assembly;]

[0052] Figure 20 is a [representative] top cutaway detail of an alternative version of the twelfth embodiment of the present invention illustrating a casting form including a four module hard pocket connecting member support assembly[;].

[0053] Figure 21 is a cutaway top view detail of a thirteenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a casting form including a hard pocket connecting member support assembly[;] in a first orientation.

[0054] Figure 22 is a cutaway top view detail of the thirteenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a casting form including a hard pocket connecting member support assembly[;] in a second orientation.

[0055] Figure 23 is a cutaway top view detail of the thirteenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a casting form including a hard pocket connecting member support assembly[;] in a third orientation.

[0056] Figure 24 is a [representative side] perspective view [cutaway detail] of a fourteenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a casting form including a connecting member support assembly [a pocket for a connecting member support assembly] including a seal ring[;] and a pocket cutter edge.

[0057] Figure 25 is a [representative] side view cutaway detail of a fourteenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a pocket for a connecting member support assembly including a seal ring [and a pocket cutter edge;].

[0058] Figure 26 is a [representative] side view cutaway detail of a fourteenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a [casting form including] pocket for a connecting member support assembly including a seal ring and a pocket cutter edge[;].

[0059] Figure 27 is a [representative] side view cutaway detail of fifteenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a casting form including a connecting member support assembly including a rail spike attachable to the form support and reinforcement member[;].

[0060] Figure 28 is a [representative] side view cutaway detail of the fifteenth embodiment of Figure 28, illustrating a casting form including a connecting member support assembly including a connecting member spacer attachable to the form support and reinforcement member and a connecting member crushable spacer[;].

[0061] Figure 29 is a [representative] side view cutaway detail of a sixteenth embodiment of a casting form including a lag shield attached to the form support and reinforcement member[;] illustrating a plug to seal the shield during casting.

[0062] Figure 30 is a [representative] side view cutaway detail of a casting [form] produced using the casting form of Figure 29, [including a lag shield attached to the form support and

reinforcement member showing a plug to seal the shield during casting and showing] illustrating a hinge pin insertable after casting[;].

[0063] Figure 31 is a [representative] side view cutaway detail [showing] illustrating a form positioning and dampening assembly[;]. of the second embodiment of the present invention.

[0064] Figure 32 is a [representative] side view cutaway detail [showing] illustrating a collar for the form positioning and dampening assembly[;].

[0065] Figure 33 is a [representative] perspective view of an alternate form shape for a casting form for a columnar structural shape of the present invention[;].

[0066] Figure 34 is a [representative] perspective view of [an] another alternate form shape for a casting form for a columnar structural shape of the present invention[;].

[0067] Figure 35 is a [representative] perspective view of [an] another alternate form shape for a casting form for a columnar structural shape adapted for casting a pier and post structural shape[;].

[0068] Figure 36 is a [representative] perspective view of [an] another alternate form shape for a casting form for a columnar structural shape adapted for casting a pier and post structural shape[;].

[0069] Figure 37 is a [representative] perspective partial cross-sectional view of a form support assembly supporting a pliable tubular form[;].

[0070] Figure 38 is a [representative] perspective partial cross-sectional view of a form support assembly supporting a pliable tubular form[;].

[0071] Figure 39 is a [representative] perspective detail view of a form support assembly supporting a pliable tubular form and a form suspension assembly[;].

[0072] Figure 40 [through 42 are representative] is a perspective [views] view of a cast-in-place structural element casting form including a connecting member attachment assembly[; and].

[0073] Figure 41 is another perspective view of a cast-in-place structural element casting form including a connecting member attachment assembly.

[0074] Figure 42 is another perspective view of a cast-in-place structural element casting form including a connecting member attachment assembly.

[0075] Figure 43 is a schematic representation of a post formed with the devices and according to the methods or the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0076] Figure 1 is a perspective view of the overall fencing system being erected according to the teachings of the present invention illustrating completed fence sections and fence sections under construction. Referring to Figure 1, fencing system 10 is [shown] illustrated including a plurality of fence posts 11a through 11e and casting forms 30a and 30b including pliable tubular segments 31a and 31b suspended from form support and reinforcement members 15a and 15b. Casting forms 30a and 30b are [shown] illustrated erected and awaiting placement of a curable casting mixture into casting forms 30a and 30b. A plurality of substantially horizontal connecting members, denoted generally by the numeral 12, are [shown] illustrated supported by the plurality of fence posts 11a through 11e and casting forms 30a and 30b. It will be noted that connecting member 12 may be

supported by casting forms 30a and 30b prior to the placement of a curable casting mixture into the forms.

[0077] Figure 2 is a cutaway side view of a first embodiment of a casting form for a fence post to which a plurality of horizontal connecting members have been attached prior to casting the fence post in place. Referring to Figure 2, [is a representative cross-sectional view of] casting form 30 [including] includes pliable tubular segment 312 placed about form support and reinforcement member 15 suspended from form suspension assembly 50. Casting form 30 [includes] may be aligned along longitudinal axis LA. Form support and reinforcement member 15 [is] may be driven into substrate S of post hole PH. In the embodiment [shown] illustrated in Figure 2, casting form 30 may also [includes] include connecting member support assemblies 80a through 80f for supporting and positioning connecting members 12a through 12f relative to casting form 30 before and during the placement and curing of a curable casting mixture in pliable tubular segment 312. [As shown,]

[0078] Figure 3 is a cutaway side view of a cast-in-place fence post 5 made using the casting form of Figure 2, illustrating horizontal connecting members supported by the fence post. Referring to Figure 3, [is a representative cross-sectional view of] fence post 5 may be formed of concrete 6 cast about form support and reinforcement member 15. Form support and reinforcement

member 15 [is] may be driven into substrate S. End portions [An end] of each of connecting members 12a through 12f [respectively] are held and supported by blockouts 7a through 7f, respectively, formed about the ends of connecting members 12a through 12f when concrete 6 is placed in casting form 30 as [shown] illustrated in Figure 2.

[0079] Figure 4 is a cutaway side view detail of a the casting form for a cast-in-place fence of the present invention illustrating, in a second embodiment, a form positioning and dampening assembly 20 further illustrated in Figure 31, in a third embodiment, a suspension assembly illustrated in more detail in Figure 5, and in a tenth embodiment, a connecting member support assembly illustrated in more detail in Figure 14. Note that each of the elements 5, 14, and 3140 need not be applied together in one embodiment of the present invention, but rather may be applied separately or in combination with other embodiments of the present invention as appropriate.

[0080] Referring to Figure 4, [is a representative cross-sectional view of] casting form 304 [including] includes pliable tubular segment 314 placed about form support and reinforcement member 15, suspended from form suspension assembly 504 with form support and reinforcement member 15 being stabilized by form positioning and dampening assembly 20. Form support and reinforcement member 15 is driven into substrate S of post hole PH. In the embodiment [shown] illustrated in Figure 4, casting form 304 [also includes] may be aligned along longitudinal axis LA.

Connecting member support assemblies 80a through 80f support and position connecting members 12a through 12f relative to casting form 304 before and during the placement and curing of a curable casting mixture in pliable tubular segment 314. Connecting member support assemblies 80a through 80f are formed including soft pockets 81a through 81f. Soft pockets 81d through 81f are attached to pliable tubular segment 314. Connecting members 12a, 12c and 12e are [shown] illustrated in various stages of positioning and placement in soft pockets 81a, 81c and 81e of connecting member support assemblies 80a, 80c and 80e.

[0081] Figure 5 is a cutaway side view detail of a third embodiment of the casting form of the present invention, illustrating a one embodiment of a form suspension assembly. Referring to Figure 5, [Figures 5 through 7] casting form 305 is [shown] illustrated including form support and reinforcement member 15 and pliable tubular segment 315 including sidewall 37. Pliable tubular segment 315 is suspended from form suspension assembly 504 about form support and reinforcement member 15. Form suspension assembly 504 includes suspension assembly connector 53 which is configured as a cap for placement on the uppermost end of form support and reinforcement member 15. A plurality of support ring support arms 52 are attached to and extend radially from suspension assembly connector 53.

COPY WITH CHANGES HIGHLIGHTED

[0082] In the embodiment [shown] illustrated in Figure 5, pliable tubular segment 315 is formed having support ring compartment 32 formed at first end 33 of pliable tubular segment 315. First end 33 of pliable tubular segment 315 includes support ring compartment 32 for containing form support ring 51. Form support ring compartment 32 may be formed by folding first end 33 of pliable tubular segment 315 back upon itself to form collar 34, and, in those instances wherein polyethylene sheet material is used to form pliable tubular segment 315, first end 33 is folded back upon itself about support ring 51 and may be joined by impulse or plastic welding to form support ring compartment 32.

[0083] Figure 6 is a perspective view of a fourth embodiment of the casting form of the present invention, illustrating another embodiment of a form support assembly 506 supporting a pliable tubular form. In the embodiment [shown] illustrated in Figure 6, casting form 306 may be provided with a plurality of support ring support arms 52, [are] attached to suspension assembly connector 53 and extend radially for connection to first support ring member 55. Second support ring member 56 is sized for placement about the outer perimeter of first support ring member 55. In use, pliable tubular segment 316 is placed about form support and reinforcement member 15, with first support ring member 55 disposed within aperture 38 of pliable tubular segment 316. Second support ring member 56 is placed about the outer perimeter of first support ring member 55 and first end 33 of pliable tubular segment 316 is compressively engaged or pinched between first support ring

member 55 and second support ring member 56. Following curing, second support ring member 56 and pliable tubular segment 316 may be stripped and disposed. Alternately, pliable tubular segment 316 may be formed of a material [the] that decomposes in a relatively short period of time and may remain in place for the required period of time.

[0084] Figure 7 is a cutaway side view detail of a fifth embodiment of the casting form 317 of the present invention, illustrating another embodiment of a form suspension assembly. In the embodiment of Figure 7, casting form 307 may be provided with a [of] form suspension assembly 502 [shown in Figure 7,] connected by a plurality of support ring support arms 52 [are] attached to suspension assembly connector 53 and extend radially for connection to support ring 57. As [shown] illustrated in Figure 7, support ring 57 includes apertures 54 which facilitate the flow of casting material past support ring 57.

[0085] Figure 8 is an enlarged cutaway side view of the fifth embodiment of Figure 7, illustrating details of the means for attaching a pliable tubular segment to a form suspension assembly. Referring to Figure 8, [is a detailed side cutaway view of] retainer ring 58 [engaging] engages retainer aperture 59. In use, [and referring to Figures 7 and 8,] pliable tubular segment 317 is placed about form support and reinforcement member 15, with support ring 57 disposed within aperture 38 of pliable tubular segment 317. Retainer ring 58 is forced against sidewall 37 near first

end 338 of pliable tubular segment 31Z into a retainer aperture 59 compressively engaging or pinching a portion of first end 338 between retainer ring 58 and retainer aperture 59.

[0086] Figures 9 and 10 [show] illustrate alternate preferred embodiments of form suspension assembly 60, including a plurality of strap segments 61a through 61d are attached to pliable tubular segment 31. Figure 9 is a perspective view of a sixth embodiment of the casting form of the present invention, illustrating another embodiment of a form support assembly supporting a pliable tubular form. Referring to Figure 9, [shows] casting form 60 [30 including] includes form support and reinforcement member 15 pliable tubular segment 319. [Figures 9 and 10 show an alternate preferred embodiment of form suspension assembly 60, including a] A plurality of strap segments 61a through 61d are attached to pliable tubular segment 319. As [shown] illustrated in Figure 9 strap segments 61a through 61d attach near collar 349 of pliable tubular segment 319 and extend across the aperture [open at first end 33]. As [shown] illustrated in Figure 9, strap segments 61a through 61d are simply set on top of form support and reinforcement member 15.

[0087] Alternately, in a similar manner to that illustrated [as shown] in Figure 10, an aperture [62] may be formed at intersection [64] 62 of strap segments 61a through 61d and form support and reinforcement member 15 may be inserted through an aperture [62] to position and center pliable

tubular segment 312 about form support and reinforcement member 15. Strap segments 61a through 61d attach near a first end [33] of pliable tubular segment 312. Alternately, strap segments 61a through 61d may be formed without an aperture [64] and intersection [64] 62 may simply rest atop form support and reinforcement member 15.

[0088] Figure 10 is a perspective view of a seventh embodiment of the casting form of the present invention, illustrating another embodiment of a form support assembly, here illustrated at an upper end of a pliable tubular segment. Referring to Figure 10, one method for the manufacture of form suspension assembly 6010 is [shown] illustrated, wherein pliable tubular segment 3110 is modified and adapted to provide a plurality of strap segments 610a through 610d as [shown] illustrated. Strap segments 610a through 610d are cut out of the sidewall 37 of pliable tubular segment 3110 near first end 33. Strap segments 610a through 610d are folded back upon themselves providing a reinforcement tab 63 at the end of each strap segment 610a through 610d. Strap segments 610a through 610d are laid one over the other at intersection 640 and, in those instances wherein polyethylene sheet material is used to form pliable tubular segment 3110, welded by impulse or plastic welding joining strap segments 610a through 610d.

[0089] Aperture 620 may then be formed at intersection 640 by punching through the collective thicknesses of strap segments 610a through 610d. First end 33 of pliable tubular segment 3110 may

be rolled back to form a collar [34, (shown) such as collar 34 illustrated in Figure 9 ()]. Collar 34 serves as a horizontal or circumferential reinforcement strip.

[0090] Figure 11 is a side view detail of a eighth embodiment of the casting form of the present invention, illustrating another embodiment of a form support assembly supporting a pliable tubular form. Figure 12 is a front view detail of the form support assembly of Figure 11. Referring to Figures 11 and 12, an alternate method for configuring a form suspension assembly 70 is [shown] illustrated. Casting form 3011 is [shown] illustrated including form support and reinforcement member 15 and pliable tubular segment 3111. Pliable tubular segment 3111 is suspended from form suspension assembly 70 about form support and reinforcement member 15. Form suspension assembly 70 is formed as a stirrup hanger. In the embodiment [shown] illustrated, form suspension assembly 70 is formed of a polymer sheet material as strip 71 attached along a length of pliable tubular segment 3111, forming first reinforcement strip 72. Strip 71 spans first end 33 of pliable tubular segment 3111, forming strap 73.

[0091] Strip 71 is then attached along a length of pliable tubular segment 3111 forming second reinforcement strip 74 which is substantially opposite from first reinforcement strip 72. Strap 73 may be formed by folding or rolling the mid-length portion of strip 71 so as to decrease overall width and increase overall thickness of the mid-length portion of strip 71 forming strap 73. The

folded or rolled section may be spot welded to retain the desired configuration. First reinforcement strip 72 and second reinforcement strip 74 provide additional thickness and increased tensile strength to the length of pliable tubular segment 3111. First reinforcement strip 72 and second reinforcement strip 74 may be formed of a polymer sheet material attached to pliable tubular segment 3111 by means of plastic or impulse welding.

[0092] Figure 11 also [shows] ~~illustrates~~ first end of connecting member 12 inserted in blockout 75 of connecting member support assembly 70 for supporting and positioning connecting member 12 relative to casting form 3011 before and during the placement and curing of a curable casting mixture in pliable tubular segment 3111. Casting form 3011 is [shown] ~~illustrated~~ also including blockout 76 for accepting placement of an end of a second connecting member, (not shown), through sidewall 37 of pliable tubular segment 3111.

[0093] Figure 13 is a cutaway side view of a ninth embodiment of the casting form 6013 of the present invention, illustrating detail of one means for attaching a form suspension assembly to a form support and reinforcement member. Referring to Figure 13, suspension assembly connector 65 may be employed to position and support pliable tubular segment 3113 such that first end 33 of pliable tubular segment 3113 is located above upper end 16 of form support and reinforcement member 15. Suspension assembly connector 65 is adapted to be placed over upper end 16 of form

support and reinforcement member 15 and includes a platform 67 for supporting straps 61. Threaded aperture 66 of threaded retainer 68 suspension assembly connector 65 and retains pliable tubular segment 3113 in position during casting with first end 33 of pliable tubular segment 3113 located above upper end 46 of form support and reinforcement member 15.

[0094] Figure 14 an enlarged side cutaway view of a tenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a connecting member support assembly 14 of Figure 4. Figure 14 [shows] illustrates pliable tubular segment 314 placed about form support and reinforcement member 15. Pliable tubular segment 314 is formed including connecting member support assemblies 80a and 80b. First end 13a of connecting member 12a is positioned within connecting member support assembly 80a. Figure 15 is a perspective cutaway view of a connecting member support assembly 80a of Figure 14 [For purposes of illustration, connecting member support assembly 80a will be described more fully with reference to Figure 15]. Figure 15 [shows] illustrates casting form 3015 including form support and reinforcement member 15, and pliable tubular segment 314. Connecting member support assembly 80a includes pocket 81[a] which is formed from first pocket segment 82 and second pocket segment 83. First pocket segment 82 includes aperture 84 including peripheral edge 85. First pocket segment 82 also includes peripheral edge [87] 86. Second pocket segment 83 includes peripheral edge [86] 87. Peripheral edges 86 and 87 are joined to form, preferably, a fluid proof barrier. In the case wherein pliable tubular segment 314 is formed of a

polymer, peripheral edges of first pocket segment 82 and second pocket segment 83 may be joined by plastic or impulse welding. Similarly, peripheral edge 85 of aperture 84 may be joined to peripheral edge 39 of cutout 36 in sidewall 37 of pliable tubular segment 314 by impulse or plastic welding.

[0095] Figure 16 is a side cutaway view of eleventh embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a connecting member attached to and supported by the casting form. Figure 17 is a top cutaway view of the eleventh embodiment of Figure 16, illustrating a connecting member attached to and supported by the casting form. [Figures 16 and 17 show yet another alternate preferred embodiment of connecting member support assembly 95.] In this eleventh embodiment, pliable tubular segment 316 is placed about form support and reinforcement members 15a and 15b. Connecting member support assembly 95 is [shown] illustrated including stirrup portion 98 which may be formed of a molded plastic and includes reinforcement member engaging elements 96 and 97.

[0096] Reinforcement member engaging elements 96 and 97 are formed as tubular segments oriented to be placed over form support and reinforcement members 15a and 15b respectively allowing connecting member support assembly 95 to be slid down form support and reinforcement members 15a and 15b and positioned where desired. Set screws [17a] 47a and [17b] 47b are used

to retain connecting member support assembly 95 in position prior to and during the casting process. Connecting member support assembly 95 also includes spacer 99 which limits the travel of a connecting member (not shown) upon insertion into the connecting member support assembly 95.

[0097] Figure 18 is a cutaway side view detail of a twelfth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a casting form including a hard pocket connecting member support assembly. Figure 19 is a cutaway top view detail of a casting form of Figure 18. [Figures 18 and 19 shows yet another alternative embodiment of connecting member support assembly 105.] Referring to Figures 18 and 19, [Once again] pliable tubular segment 3118 is placed about form support and reinforcement member 15. Connecting member support assembly 105 is [shown] illustrated including body portion 101 which may be formed of a molded plastic or other suitable material.

[0098] In the embodiment [shown] illustrated in Figures 18 and 19, body portion 101 includes a plurality of apertures 109 which facilitate fluid flow of a casting material about connecting member support assembly 105. Pockets 106a and 106b connect to body portion 101 and have an opposing orientation. In the embodiment [shown] illustrated, pockets 106a and 106b are oriented so that a longitudinal axis of pocket 106a and a longitudinal axis of pocket 106b lie substantially coaxially to one another along axis A.

[0099] It is to be distinctly understood that other configurations and angular relationships are achievable and intended to be within the scope of the present invention. Body portion 101 includes aperture [111] 102 sized to permit a sliding engagement of body portion 101 with form support and reinforcement member 15. Connecting member support assembly 105 may be slid down form support and reinforcement member 15 and positioned where desired. Set screw 17 retains connecting member support assembly 105 in a selected position prior to and during the casting process. Connecting member support assembly 105 also includes spacer 107a and spacer 107b for maintaining gap G, as [shown] illustrated with reference to pocket 106b, between first end 13b of second connecting member 12b and a back surface of pocket 106b. As [shown] illustrated, additional rebar 15' may be [are] positioned within casting form 3018 to provide additional structural reinforcement.

[00100] Figure 20 is a top cutaway detail of an alternative version of the twelfth embodiment of the present invention illustrating a casting form including a four module hard pocket connecting member support assembly. Referring to Figure 20, casting form 3020 is [shown] illustrated including yet another alternative embodiment of connecting member support assembly 110, including pockets 111a, 111b, 111c and 111d equally spaced about the periphery of casting form 3020 for forming blockouts at four equally spaced intervals about the periphery of casting form

3020. Pockets 111a, 111b, 111c and 111d are connected to body portion 113 having aperture 114 formed there through.

[00101] Form support and reinforcement member 15 inserts through aperture 114 and connecting member support assembly 110 is located along the length of form support and reinforcement member 15 and secured in position by means of set screw 47. In the embodiment [shown] illustrated, pockets 111a and 111c are oriented so that a longitudinal axis of pocket 111a and a longitudinal axis of pocket 111c lie substantially coaxially to one another along axis A1. Similarly, pockets 111b and 111d are oriented so that a longitudinal axis of pocket 111b and a longitudinal axis of pocket 111d lie substantially coaxially to one another along axis A2.

[00102] Figure 21 is a cutaway top view detail of a thirteenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a casting form 3021 including a hard pocket connecting member support assembly in a first orientation. Figure 22 is a cutaway top view detail of the thirteenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a casting form 3021 including a hard pocket connecting member support assembly in a second orientation. Figure 23 is a cutaway top view detail of the thirteenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a casting form 3021 including a hard pocket connecting member support assembly in a third orientation. [Referring to Figures 21 through 23, casting form 30 is shown including yet another alternative embodiment of connecting

member support assembly 115.] Here, connecting member support assembly 115 is [shown] illustrated including molded hard pockets 116a and 116b. Pockets 116a and 116b are positioned to opposite sides of form support and reinforcement member 15 and are attached one to the other using screws 117.

[00103] As [shown] illustrated in Figure 21, hard pockets 116a and 116b are oriented so that a longitudinal axis of hard pocket 116a and a longitudinal axis of hard pocket 116b lie substantially coaxially to one another along axis A. In Figure 22, pockets 116a and 116b are [shown] illustrated offset angularly, with a longitudinal axis A1 of pocket 116a intersecting a longitudinal axis A2 of pocket 116b.

[00104] Referring to Figure 23, connecting member support assembly 115 is [shown] illustrated including pockets 116a and 116b and pockets 120a and 120b. In the embodiment [shown] illustrated, pockets 116a and 116b are oriented so that a longitudinal axis of pocket 116a and a longitudinal axis of pocket 116b lie substantially coaxially to one another along axis A1. Similarly, pockets 120a and 120b are oriented so that a longitudinal axis of pocket 120a and a longitudinal axis of pocket 120b lie substantially coaxially to one another along axis A2. As [shown] illustrated, pockets 116a and 116b are connected one to the other by screws 117. Fasteners 121 connect

pockets 120a and 120b to pockets 116a and 116b forming a connecting member support assembly 115 which provides a casting form 3020 for forming four substantially co-planar blockouts.

[0100] It may be possible that various combinations of connecting member support assemblies may be utilized when a particular circumstance deems that it may be desirable. For instance, connecting member support assembly 80a and 80b [shown] illustrated in Figure 14 may be used separately or in the alternative, may be combined with connecting member support assembly 105 as [shown] illustrated in Figures 18 and 19 where additional weight bearing capacity is desired.

[0101] Figure 24 is a perspective view of a fourteenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a casting form including a connecting member support assembly including a seal ring and a pocket cutter edge. Figure 25 is a side view cutaway detail of a fourteenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a pocket for a connecting member support assembly including a seal ring. Figure 26 is a side view cutaway detail of a fourteenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a pocket for a connecting member support assembly including a seal ring and a pocket cutter edge. [Figures 24 through 26 illustrate hard pocket 130 including seal ring 131.] Hard pocket 130 is positioned within pliable tubular segment 3125.

COPY WITH CHANGES HIGHLIGHTED

[0102] Seal ring 131 is configured including a pocket cutter edge 132 which, when pressed against side wall 37 of pliable tubular segment 3125, both cuts the sidewall 37 and seals the remaining pliable tubular segment 3125 to pocket 130 forming a water tight joint between the sidewall 37 of pliable tubular segment 3125 and pocket 130. Seal ring 131 includes pocket cutter edge 132 which may be configured as [shown] illustrated both to cut through sidewall 37 of pliable tubular segment 3125 and to cooperate with lip 133 to hold a portion of sidewall 37 of pliable tubular segment 3125 in compression to form preferably a substantially water tight seal with pliable tubular segment 3125 between hard pocket 130 and seal ring 131.

[0103] Figure 27 is a side view cutaway detail of fifteenth embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a casting form including a connecting member support assembly including a rail spike attachable to the form support and reinforcement member. Figure 28 is a side view cutaway detail of the fifteenth embodiment of Figure 28, illustrating a casting form including a connecting member support assembly including a connecting member spacer attachable to the form support and reinforcement member and a connecting member crushable spacer. Referring to Figures 27 and 28, casting form 3027 is [shown including] includes including pliable tubular segment 3127 positioned about form support and reinforcement member 15. First end 13a of connecting member 12a is [shown] illustrated positioned in connecting member support assembly 80a.

[0104] Casting form 302Z also includes connecting member support assembly 80b. First end 13b of connecting member 12b is [shown] illustrated positioned for placement in connecting member support assembly 80b. As [shown] illustrated, casting form 302Z includes spacer 89 for maintaining a distance between, as [shown] illustrated by way of illustration, first end 13a of connecting member 12a and form support and reinforcement member 15. Spacer 89 is located along the length of form support and reinforcement member 15 and secured in a selected position by means of set screw 88.

[0105] In the embodiment [shown] illustrated in Figure 28, spacer 89 also includes connecting member retainer spikes 87a and 87b which provide a more secure attachment, particularly during the casting process, between connecting member 12a and casting form 302Z. In the embodiment [shown] illustrated in Figure 28, connecting member support assembly 80a includes a crushable spacer 77 which provides for a more secure fit about a periphery of, as [shown] illustrated by way of illustration, first end 13a of connecting member 12a. Crushable spacer 77 may be formed of any of a variety of compactable materials, for instance, a corrugated plastic sheet.

[0106] Figure 29 is a side view cutaway detail of a sixteenth embodiment of a casting form including a lag shield attached to the form support and reinforcement member illustrating a plug to

seal the shield during casting. Figure 30 is a side view cutaway detail of a casting produced using the casting form of Figure 29, illustrating a hinge pin insertable after casting. Referring to Figures 29 and 30, a means is [shown] illustrated for connecting any of a variety of threaded components to a cast-in-place columnar structure. As [shown] illustrated, threaded component attachment assembly 140 includes body 142. Lag shield 141 attaches to and extends from body 142 contacting sidewall 37 of pliable tubular segment 3129, [shown] illustrated in Figure 29. Lag shield 141 includes threaded aperture 144.

[0107] As [seen] illustrated in Figure 29, plug 145 is configured to penetrate sidewall 37 of pliable tubular segment 3129 and seal threaded aperture 144 during a casting process. Threaded component attachment assembly 140 is slideably positioned along the length of form support and reinforcement member 15 and fixed in a selected position by set screw 143. As [shown] illustrated in Figure 30, hinge pin 147 includes thread 146 for [threadedly] engaging threaded aperture 144 of lag shield 141. Jam nut 148 retains hinge pin 147 in a vertical orientation.

[0108] Figure 31 is a side view cutaway detail illustrating a form positioning and dampening assembly of the second embodiment of the present invention, previously discussed above in connection with Figure 4. [Referring to Figure 31, form positioning and dampening assembly 20 is shown to advantage.] Pliable tubular segment 31 is draped about form support and

reinforcement member 15 and an outer peripheral edge of ring 21 near second end 35 of pliable tubular segment 314. Form positioning and dampening assembly 20 includes ring 21 including a plurality of arms 22. Collar 27 forms the hub of positioning and dampening assembly 20 and includes aperture 29, slideably disposed along form support and reinforcement member 15.

[0109] In one embodiment, the plurality of arms 22 attach to collar 27 and extending radially through and supporting positioning ring 21. Each of the plurality of arms 22 may include pads 25 attached at a distal end of the arm for limiting penetration of the arm into sidewall SW of post hole PH, As form positioning and dampening assembly 20 is pushed into post hole PH, the plurality of arms 22 press against sidewall SW of post hole PH positioning form support and reinforcement member 15 with respect to sidewall SW of post hole PH and dampening vibrations to which form support and reinforcement member 15 may be subjected to during erection or casting processes.

[0110] Referring to Figure 32 a side cutaway detail of collar 27. As [shown] illustrated, one way flippers 28 extends radially inward from collar 27 into aperture 29. One way flippers 28 may be laminated into collar 27 when collar 27 is formed. Collar 27 is placed over form support and reinforcement member 15. As collar 27 is forced down along the length of form support and reinforcement member 15 one way flippers 28 create a resistance to the downward travel of collar

27 which may be overcome by a pushing force applied to collar 27. Once positioned, collar will remain in place, and more particularly, collar 27 will resist upward travel due, for instance to buoyancy.

[0111] Figures 33 through 36 are [representative] perspective views of alternate configurations for columnar member casting forms 201 through 204, respectively. As [shown] illustrated, configurations for columnar member casting forms 201 through 204 may include various combinations of tubular segments 207 and fructose conical transitions 208 and 209. Additionally, configurations for columnar member casting forms as typified in by columnar member casting forms 201 through 204 may include various cap portions as typified by dome cap 205 and flat cap 206.

[0112] Referring to Figures 37 and 38, alternate embodiments of the present invention are [shown] illustrated, wherein [the] additional form support [member is] members are erected on a surface external to a sidewall of the pliable tubular segment. Referring to Figure 37, an alternate preferred embodiment of casting form 200 is shown including pliable tubular segment 231 suspended from structural support member 215. As [shown] illustrated, suspension assembly 250 attaches between structural support member 215 and pliable tubular segment 231. In the embodiment shown, structural support member 215 includes legs 201a, 201b, 201c and 201d

which engage a surface L adjacent to a location upon which the cast-in-place structural element is to be cast, in this case substrate S of post hole PH. Legs 201a, 201b, 201c and 201d of structural support member 215 may be driven into surface L adjacent to a location upon which the cast-in-place structural element is to be cast, or in the alternative may simply be erected adjacent to the location at which the cast-in-place structural element is to be formed and cast. As seen in Figure 37, casting form 200 may include a separate reinforcing member 240.

[0113] Figure 38 [shows] illustrates an alternate preferred embodiment of casting form 300 including pliable tubular segment 331 suspended from structural support member 315. As shown, form suspension assembly 350 attaches between structural support member 315 and pliable tubular segment 331. In the embodiment shown, structural support member 315 includes legs 301a, 301b and 301c which engage a surface L adjacent to a location upon which the cast-in-place structural element is to be cast, in this case substrate S of post hole PH. Curable casting mixture 6 has been placed in and is contained by pliable tubular segment 331.

[0114] Figure 39 is a representative perspective detail view of form suspension assembly 250 supporting pliable tubular segment 231. Structural support member 215 includes legs 201a, 201b, 201c and 201d, each including upper distal end 202a, 202b, 202c and 202d respectively. Any of a variety of readily available structural shapes formed of a variety of common materials

COPY WITH CHANGES HIGHLIGHTED

}
may be adapted for use for legs 201a, 201b, 201c and 201d. As shown here, a length of rebar is utilized for each legs 201a, 201b, 201c and 201d. Form suspension assembly 250 includes straps 252a, 252b, 252c and 252d each formed as an extension of an upper edge 255 of pliable tubular segment 231. Each strap 252a, 252b, 252c and 252d includes an aperture, apertures 253a and 253b being shown in Figure. 39. Upper distal ends 202a, 202b, 202c and 202d of legs 201a, 201b, 201c and 201d are passed through the apertures formed in each strap 252a, 252b, 252c and 252d, apertures 253a and 253b being shown in Figure 39, as seen with specific reference to distal ends 202a and 202b shown passing through 253a and 253b respectively.

[0115] Straps 252a, 252b, 252c and 252d are passed about and over distal ends 202a, 202b, 202c and 202d respectively as shown with specific reference to strap 252d, which is shown passed about and over distal ends 202d. Retaining caps 251a, 251b, 251c and 251d are then placed over upper distal ends 202a, 202b, 202c and 202d of legs 201a, 201b, 201c and 201d as shown with specific reference to retaining cap 251c shown place over upper distal end 202c of leg 201c securing strap 252c.

[0116] Figures 40 through 42 [show] illustrate casting form 400 including pliable tubular segment 410, suspension assembly 420 and connecting member attachment assembly 430. Casting form 400 also includes form block-out 430, which in the embodiment shown includes

block 432 formed of material having a cross-sectional configuration that is substantially identical a cross-sectional configuration of an element to be inserted, (not shown), following casting and curing the structural element. In a preferred embodiment, block 432 is formed of a polystyrene material that is readily formed or shaped to have a perimeter and cross-sectional configuration of the element to be inserted in the void formed in the structural member in the manner described herein.

[0117] Block 432 is inserted into plastic sheath 431, as shown in Figure 40, and wrapped, as shown in Figure 41, so block 432 is covered with plastic sheath 431 including end panels 433 and 434. Form block-out 430 is then inserted into pliable tubular segment 410 and located at a selected position, as shown in Figure 42, and plastic weld 435 seals plastic sheath 431 to sidewall 411 of pliable tubular segment 410. Referring to Figure 43, following casting, form block-out 430 may be readily removed from post P leaving voids V1 through V3. Rails R1 through R3 are insertable, as shown in voids V1 through V3.

[0118] While this invention has been described with reference to the detailed embodiments, this is not meant to be construed in a limiting sense. Various modifications to the described embodiments as well as the inclusion or exclusion of additional embodiments will be apparent to persons skilled in the art upon reference to this description. It is therefore

Ser. No. 10/613,900

SUBSTITUTE SPECIFICATION

COPY WITH CHANGES HIGHLIGHTED

contemplated that the appended claims will cover any such modifications or embodiments as fall within the true scope of the invention.